

## Social Media

### 1055.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to department employees and volunteers regarding appropriate speech and expression for personal and department sponsored social networking websites, web pages, and other electronically transmitted or hard copied material. Nothing in this policy is intended to prohibit or infringe upon any communication, speech, or expression by employees that is protected or privileged under law.

This policy is intended as a supplement to the City of Santa Rosa Social Media Policy to address issues unique to the Santa Rosa Police Department and its employees.

*Adopted 9-12-12 by Chief Thomas E. Schwedhelm.*

### 1055.2 DEFINITIONS

- (a) **Social Media** - A category of internet-based resources that integrates user-generated content and user participation. This includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites (Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn), microblogging sites (Twitter, Nixle), photo and video-sharing sites (Flickr, YouTube), wikis (Wikipedia), blogs, and news sites (Digg, Reddit).
- (b) **Social Networks** - Online platforms where users can create profiles, share information, and socialize with others using a range of technologies.
- (c) **Electronic Communication** - Any kind of communications, created by, represented by, sent to, or stored by any user using any electronic communications system, including all information, data, and attachments to the communication.
- (d) **Blog** - A contraction of the term "weblog" is a type of website, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. "Blog" can also be used as a verb, meaning to maintain or add content to a blog.
- (e) **Personal Information** - Any type of information that might lead to the identification of any individual. Examples may include social security numbers, dates of birth, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, driver's license or other state identification numbers.
- (f) **Electronic Media** - Digital photos, audio recordings, videos or digital information.
- (g) **Post or Posting** - Text or digital information that is placed on a website. This includes text, photographs, audio, video, or any other multimedia file.
- (h) **Confidential Information** - Any information of a personal or private nature or that is deemed confidential by law. This includes information that is obtained as a result of any law enforcement activity including, but not limited to: information or digital media

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depicting the Santa Rosa Police Department, its employees, crime scenes, internal videos, daily work activity, or information sensitive to law enforcement that has not been authorized for public release.

- (i) **Proprietary Information** - Any photographs, videos or information digital or otherwise created or obtained while an employee is on duty remains the property of the Santa Rosa Police Department. The work product of the Santa Rosa Police Department is subject to all federal law, state law, City codes, and department policies regarding its confidentiality and release.
- (j) **Work Product** - Anything created by an employee as part of the employee's duties or activities on behalf of the City is considered to be the property of the Santa Rosa Police Department. Examples may include, but are not limited to: photos, videos, audio recordings, blog entries depicting the Santa Rosa Police Department or its employees, internal videos, daily work activity, electronic files or documents.
- (k) **Employee** - Any full, part-time or temporary employee, intern or volunteer.

#### 1055.3 USE OF DEPARTMENT SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

- (a) All Santa Rosa Police Department Social Media Pages shall adhere to the standards and requirements in the City of Santa Rosa Social Media Policy.
- (b) **No confidential information may be used or posted on any department owned or sponsored social media page without authorization** of the Chief of Police, a Division Manager, or a Bureau Manager.
- (c) Employees may create and use fictitious social media accounts with the approval of a supervisor as a tool to assist with official criminal investigations.
- (d) When evaluating whether to disseminate information via social media sites, employees shall use the following criteria:
  - 1. Can we legally release the information?
  - 2. Is the information a matter of public interest?
  - 3. Does releasing the information benefit the department and community?

#### 1055.4 EMPLOYEE USE OF PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA SITES - STANDARD OF CONDUCT

- (a) The public has placed its trust in the Santa Rosa Police Department to administer a professional, proactive, and progressive law enforcement agency. The department embraces the public trust and recognizes that effective law enforcement would be severely hampered if such trust were lost.
- (b) By accepting employment with the Santa Rosa Police Department, all employees are subject to a higher standard of conduct than is found in other government service.

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Employees must be aware that their actions on or off duty are subject to public scrutiny and reflect on the Santa Rosa Police Department and the law enforcement profession. This includes the use of social media whether for departmental or personal purposes.

- (c) Subject to any state and federal law, department employees who choose to maintain or participate as private citizens in social media or social networking sites shall abide by the following standards of conduct:
1. Employees shall not post content on social media sites that will tend to compromise or damage the mission, function, reputation, or professionalism of the Santa Rosa Police Department or its employees.
  2. Employees are prohibited from using department computers or cell phones/ devices for personal participation in social media or social networking, unless permission is granted by a supervisor.
  3. Employees are prohibited from using privately-owned personal computers or devices for personal participation in social media or social networking while on duty, except in the following circumstances:
    - (a) When brief personal communication may be warranted by the circumstances (e.g., to inform family of extended hours).
    - (b) During authorized breaks; however, such usage should be limited and not disruptive to the work environment.
  4. Employees shall not disclose, post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate any personal, proprietary, or confidential information to which they have access as a result of their employment without express permission from the Chief of Police, a Division Manager, or a Bureau Manager. Disclosure of such information, whether via social media or any other method, is also regulated by the Eighth Canon of the Santa Rosa Police Department Code of Conduct.
  5. Employees shall refrain from speech or expression that could reasonably be foreseen as creating a negative impact on the credibility of the employee as a witness.
  6. Employees shall refrain from posting content of any form that could reasonably be foreseen as creating a negative impact on the safety of Santa Rosa Police Department employees or the security of department operations.
  7. Employees shall refrain from posting content that violates the policies and procedures of the Santa Rosa Police Department or the City of Santa Rosa.
  8. Employees shall refrain from posting, transmitting, or disseminating any photographs, video or audio recordings, likenesses or images of department logos, emblems, uniforms, badges, patches, marked vehicles, equipment or other material that specifically identifies the Santa Rosa Police Department on

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any personal or social networking or other website or web page if doing so would tend to harm the reputation of the department.

9. Employees shall take reasonable and prompt action to remove any content that is in violation of this policy and/or posted by others from any web page or website maintained by the employee (e.g., social or personal websites).
- (d) Department employees should be aware that privacy settings and social media sites are constantly in flux, and they should never assume personal information posted on such sites is protected. Additionally, postings made under the claim of restricted settings may still constitute a violation of policy.
- (e) Department employees should expect that any information created, transmitted, downloaded, exchanged, or discussed in a public online forum may be accessed by the department at any time without prior notice. Employees are advised that there can be no expectation of privacy with regard to anything they post on social networking sites. The department has the right to view all postings made on public social media sites.
- (f) Any employee becoming aware of or having knowledge of a posting or of any website or web page in violation of any provision of this policy shall notify his or her supervisor immediately for follow-up action.

#### 1055.5 NIXLE USE ADDENDUM

This section is intended to establish guidelines for use of Nixle and as an addendum to the SRPD Social Media Policy.

The Santa Rosa Police Department should, whenever practical, utilize Nixle for public notifications in matters concerning public safety, urgent advisories and information such as media releases.

##### 1055.5.1 DEFINITIONS

- (a) **Nixle** - A public notification system using SMS, e-mail, Twitter and Facebook for subscribed users.
- (b) **Subscriber** - An individual who signs up for Nixle notifications originating from the Santa Rosa Police Department.
- (c) **Alert** - An emergency notification such as: an evacuation, missing person at risk, shelter in place order, and special instructions essential for public safety of which timely notification is essential.
- (d) **Advisory** - An urgent notification such as: wanted subjects, unplanned road closures and wanted vehicles.
- (e) **Community** - A notification of a non-urgent variety, such as: planned road closures, media releases and community outreach bulletins.

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#### 1055.5.2 PROCEDURE

(a) Emergency Notifications - "Alerts"

1. Primary responsibility for emergency notifications will be Communications.
2. Supervisor approval is required for "Alert" notifications.
3. "Alerts" should clearly specify the affected area.
4. "Alerts" shall be directed to the geographically specific area of the incident.
5. "Alerts" shall be sent via SMS and web/e-mail message.

(b) Urgent Notifications - "Advisory"

1. Primary responsibility for "Advisory" notifications will be Communications.
2. The on-duty supervisor shall be advised of all "Advisory" messages.
3. Whenever possible "Advisory" notifications should be directed to the geographically specific area of the incident.
4. "Advisory" notifications should clearly specify the affected area.
5. "Advisory" notifications shall be sent via SMS and web/e-mail message.

(c) Non-Urgent Notifications - "Community"

1. Primary responsibility for "Community" notifications will be the originator of the message.
2. "Community" messages shall be sent via e-mail/web message only.

(d) Information Specific to all Messages

1. Utilizing the Location filter will allow users to pinpoint notifications by using the map.
2. The originator should give consideration to publishing the notification to Twitter and Facebook.